

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia: Thank you. I appreciate you yielding time, and appreciate you bringing to the attention of the American public the need for continued support for those who are unemployed. The current economic climate has taken a toll on many families across the Nation. While the economy may be growing, there are still almost 14 million unemployed people nationally, and the unemployment rate is hovering at 9 percent. We need to take serious steps to address this crisis and create policies that create jobs.

From a long-term perspective, we need to be investing in our workforce by investing in education, in job training, beginning with early childhood education, and continuing through college and vocational education, as well as adult education and training. Unfortunately, the Republican budget makes huge cuts in our Nation's education system by cutting investments in education by over 50 percent and zeroing out many job-training investments. These cuts include services such as elementary and secondary education, educational innovation, career and technical education, cuts to community colleges, and postsecondary education. The budget also cuts the maximum Pell Grant, a vital program that makes college affordable for young students, and takes away eligibility for over a million students.

So we should be trying to work to get people back to work and increase innovation. So we ought to be actually spending more, not less. But with these cuts, fewer people will have access to education and training that they need to fuel the economic productivity and compete for the good jobs that are occurring in our labor market today.

So on a long-term basis, we need to ensure that we are building a strong and capable workforce. In the short term, we need to make sure that people who have lost their jobs during the recession are not left out in the cold. Currently, for every one job opening there are over four people applying. This means that whatever the job applicants do to help themselves, there will still be many people left out in the cold.

To add insult to injury, many applicants are not getting consideration for jobs because they have been unemployed for too long. Many employers will screen applicants and require that they are holding a job to be considered for a new job. When they find out that they are unemployed, many employers will not consider them for employment. So those who are looking for a job and have been looking for a job for a long time find that it's even harder to find a job. And these are the people that have been unemployed for 60, 90, or even 99 weeks. They are dejected, and being cut off from unemployment insurance, and not given a fair shot at a job that they are applying for.

Our focus should be particularly on what to do about the long-term unemployed and keeping them on their feet. In February, Congresswoman Barbara Lee from California and I introduced the Emergency Unemployment Compensation Extension Act to provide 14 additional weeks of unemployment compensation for the chronically unemployed so that they can stay afloat during their job search, at least until our recession is over and jobs have returned. The Emergency

Unemployment Compensation Act would, if passed, give these hardworking Americans a little more time to find a job without having to worry about making ends meet.

Now, we have to note that receipt of unemployment compensation is conditioned first on the fact that you lost your job through no fault of your own and that you are actively looking for a job and will accept a reasonable job. So these are conditions of receiving unemployment compensation. Unfortunately, this compassionate bill has been stalled in committee, and the majority of the House has not taken action on it.

To make matters worse, just a few weeks ago a new bill had been introduced in the House, which will actually weaken the unemployment compensation program. They call it the Jobs, Opportunity, Benefits, and Services Act. They call it the JOBS Act.

It would allow States to divert the Federal funds it received to pay for unemployment compensation to other purposes, including tax cuts. Jobs, that so-called JOBS Act, will essentially allow States to terminate payments of unemployment benefits, potentially eliminating \$40 billion in economic activity, according to CBO estimates. So not only are they failing to extend benefits during a time of constant high unemployment; some now want to cut off benefits all together.

Critics of the unemployment compensation believe that providing unemployment benefits will give people an incentive not to work, that people receiving unemployment compensation will merely collect the benefits as long as they can without looking for a job. But a condition of receiving the benefits, one of the conditions is you have to be actively looking for a job.

While that criticism may apply to a few bad apples, the overwhelming majority of Americans who are chronically unemployed would rather enjoy the dignity of work instead of collecting a weekly check from the government; many of these checks, on a national average, will average \$260 a week, clearly not enough for a family to survive. The overwhelming majority of chronically unemployed do not want a handout; they would like a job.

While unemployment compensation helps the unemployed, unemployment benefits also help the economy. Economists estimate that in the U.S. economy, the U.S. economy grows by \$1.61 for every dollar the government spends on unemployment compensation, because unemployed people will obviously spend every dime right away. This is in stark contrast to the economic activity generated by tax cuts, where many of the tax cuts will generate about 17 cents of economic activity for every dollar of tax cuts. This is the \$1.61 for every dollar in unemployment compensation.

So, simply put, the unemployment compensation is one of the most effective and efficient ways to stimulate the economy, and we should be focusing on providing the kind of support and stimulus to the economy in conjunction with making bold investments in our education system and our workforce. We need to make sure that we make those long-term investments in education and job training. We also need to make sure that we have a compassionate short-term solution by providing the safety net for millions of Americans who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own and haven't found a job yet.

These jobs just don't exist, and we also have to oppose the elimination of unemployment compensation by redirecting those funds to whatever the States may want, including tax cuts. That is simply wrong.

So I thank you for pointing out the need for the unemployment compensation program to continue and even be improved and oppose those initiatives that want to sabotage the unemployment compensation system.